

*IN THE TIME BEFORE DR  
ELLINGHAM  
BY MARY GRIFFITHS JAMES*

Dr Ellingham -- as the local GP -- is the star in the TV series *Doc Martin* who previously worked a vascular surgeon in London but with haemophobia. This light hearted story gives us an insight into the local community at Portwenn where the series is set. It also shows the beautiful area in which the village sits with its steep road up to the surgery, the village pub etc. and a history that can be traced back to a Celtic community. The pilchard industry was successful from early times and this can be seen in the 49 registered fishing boats in 1850. The pilchards were salted and pressed and then packed into wooden boxes and casks and they were sent all over Europe and particularly at Lent when they were very much sought by Roman Catholic countries. There was also trade in coal which was brought from South Wales.

Fast backwards to 1818 when William Thomas was born just near to Portwenn, which is in fact Port Isaac. Corn must also have been exported at one time as Port Isaac is a corruption of the Cornish name 'Porth Izzik', meaning corn port. William was a fisherman and also a tin miner and when the small hamlet of Port Quin, confusingly originally called Port Wen, went into decline William took the two mile walk to Port Isaac and this is where he lived out his life with his wife Grace. Grace was the daughter of the miller Thomas Ford and his wife Martha Worden at Trewarne Mill, St Kew. Grace and William married in the early 1840s.

Grace and William had at least four children, the latter three being born in Port Isaac. William became the Postmaster in Port Isaac and thereby started a dynasty of postal workers. In 1945 there were descendants of William still working for the General Post Office.

William and Grace's second child was Charles, born in 1855, and it is Charles who is the main character in this story. Charles' first job was as a telegraphist in his father and mother's Post Office on Fore Street, Port Isaac. Charles' father died in September of 1871 but his wife Grace, Charles and also Charles' sister appear to have kept the Post Office going but Charles married Ellen Courtis on 10 June 1879 at St George's Church, Truro and left Port Isaac.

Ellen Courtis was the daughter of Charles Courtis and Elizabeth Jenkins. Ellen did have sisters but when she married she was living at home with her father and this became Charles' new home also. At this time there was much happening in Truro as it gained city status in 1876, the Truro Wesleyan Middle Class College admitted its first pupils in 1880 and it continued as an important inland port and a stannary town for the tin mining industry where assaying and stamping was carried out. Having gained city status, the building of the cathedral commenced in 1880 and would continue throughout Charles' life in Truro. At the confluence of the rivers Kenwyn and Allen -- with a direct railway link to Paddington, London and

increased prosperity from the iron smelting, tanneries and potteries --this would have been an exciting place to live at this time when it was known as 'the London of Cornwall'.

Charles continued his work in the Post Office but had moved from a telegraphist to be a telegraph clerk. Charles was living at 27 Kenwyn Street together with his wife Ellen and father-in-law who was a retired butcher. Ellen was no doubt responsible for the house as she had no paid employment. Ellen was older than Charles, having been born in Truro in 1840 and perhaps due to her age there were no surviving children from this union. Charles later became a Post Office clerk but his health was not good and Charles was only in his mid-forties when he had to retire due to ill health. When he died on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1901 the cause of death was given as apoplexy and chronic intestinal nephritis and so life would probably have been unpleasant with no happy retirement. When Charles had registered the death of his father William in 1874, the cause of death was also said to be apoplexy.

Charles' sister Christiana Lobb was the informant at Charles' death and had travelled from her home of Brook Cottage in Port Isaac to be with her brother in his last hours at his home at 98 Kenwyn Street. Some of the Lobb family were still living in Brook Cottage in 1950. Christiana had married Richard Lobb, a wall mason, in Port Isaac and they had seven children, their daughter being the postmistress in Port Isaac up to the 1940s and dying at Brook Cottage in 1950. Like so many of the Thomas and Lobb family members, she was buried in the Church Yard at St Endillion Church. Endillion Church is the Church named after St Endelienta and built from granite brought from the Isle of Lundy in the Bristol Channel. A former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, was at one time a Prebendary at the Church.

One of Charles' nephews, like so many people at this time, had decided to take his chances outside Cornwall and so William Charles Lobb was one of many who settled in the US. His brother Donald Pascoe Lobb followed him but eventually returned to Cornwall and lived with his Uncle Charles' widow at 98 Kenwyn Street which she was running as a boarding house. Eventually Donald returned to Brook Cottage and lived there with his sister. Two other sons, Hubert and Richard Harold, were employed by the GPO as were their children although the family had spread from Port Isaac by this time. Mary, sister to Charles and Christiana, had children working for the GPO and also grandchildren. Adeline Mary Grace Mitchell worked for the Post Office in London and this is where she met and married Lt Dr William Edward Curtis, a Professor of Physics. He was a Reader at King's and in 1934 was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and later created a CBE.

There were at least thirteen members of Charles' extended family who worked in various capacities in the Post Office and some ran the Post Office in Port Isaac for over eighty years.

Following Charles' death, his widow Ellen continued to live at 98 Kerwyn Street in Truro and to run the house as a boarding house. Ellen died in 1924 thereby outliving Charles by a considerable number of years and died at the age of eighty-three.

## Fact Sheet: Charles Thomas

Pensioner Details
<i>Pensioner name:</i> Charles Thomas
<i>Person ID:</i> CW1002
<i>Your name:</i> Mary Griffiths James
<i>U3A group:</i> Heatons and Reddish
Part One: Birth and Family
1: When and where was your pensioner born?
<b>Charles</b> was born in the October quarter of 1855 in the Truro registration district, Cornwall with Port Isaac given as his place of birth on the census returns. No baptism details were found.
2: Who were your pensioners' parents? Record any details you can find out about them here (e.g. occupation, religious affiliation, whether they could read or write)
<b>Charles</b> was the son of <b>William</b> Thomas and <b>Grace Ford</b> according to the census returns.  <b>William</b> was born in Port Quin, a hamlet near to Port Isaac in 1818. He married <b>Grace</b> Ford in the Oct quarter of 1841.  <b>William</b> is on the 1851 census with Grace and 3 <b>children</b> and his occupation is given as a tin miner.  1861 census shows <b>William</b> with Grace, Charles and 2 of his siblings and William's occupation is given as fisherman  1871 census shows <b>William</b> with <b>Grace</b> and <b>Charles</b> living in the <b>Post Office in Port Isaac</b> , William being the <b>Post Master</b> and <b>Charles a telegraphist</b> .  <b>William</b> died on 8 <sup>th</sup> Sept 1874 and was buried in St Endellion Churchyard . His cause of death on his death certificate is given as apoplexy and the informant was C. Thomas in attendance, 27 Kenwyn Street, Truro.  <b>Grace</b> Ford was born on 22 Oct 1819 at Lanseage, St Kew, Cornwall. <b>Grace</b> was the daughter of <b>Thomas Ford</b> , who was born in St Kew about 1789 and his wife <b>Martha Worden</b> . Grace was one of 3 known daughters.  <b>Thomas</b> is shown to be the miller at Trewane Mill, St Kew on the 1841 census and was living with his wife <b>Martha</b> their children.

**Martha** was the daughter of Samuel Worden and Jane Calloway who married on 24 May 1780 at St Kew. Martha was one of 14 children.

Thomas and Martha had 2 known children, other than Grace:

**Betsey Worden Ford** born about 1821 and married James Bate on 5 March 1844 at St Kew. Betsey and James had 7 known children.

**Mary Bate** their last child was born in 1861 and married Robert Neal in July quarter of 1884. On the 1881 census **Mary's** occupation is given as **Telegraphist**.

**Mary Ford** was the youngest of Thomas and Martha's children, being born in 1826 and she married James Smith. They had 8 children.

**Grace Ford** married **William Thomas** in the Oct quarter of 1841 in the Bodmin registration district, Cornwall. **Grace** appears with William on the 1851; 1861; 1871 census returns and is of no occupation. However, following William's death she is shown on the 1881 census and aged 61 and to have taken over his work and is a **Post Mistress**. Her daughter **Mary** and husband and 3 children are shown living next door. 10 years later, on the 1891 census when Grace was 71, she is shown as a **Sub Postmistress** and her grand-daughter **Elizabeth Grace Lobb** is living with her and her occupation is **telegraphist**. Next door is her daughter Mary, a Mariner's wife with 2 of her children. **Grace** died on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1892 and is buried in the same grave as her husband William.

3: Did your pensioner have any siblings? What were their names, and how old were they in relation to your pensioner? Use this space to record anything else you have found out about them (e.g. occupation)

**Grace** and **William** are known to have had 3 children as well as **Charles**.

- i) **Samuel Worden Thomas** was born in the Oct quarter of 1841 in the Bodmin registration district, Cornwall. In the Oct quarter of 1865 in the Bodmin registration district he married **Ann Hambly** and they had 4 known children. The 1851 & 1861 census returns show him to be with his parents but on the 1871 census he was on the 'Betsy Jane' a vessel where his brother-in-law William Mitchell was the Master and he was the Mate. The vessel was on the Canal at Sharpness Point, Gloucestershire. Details of his Mate's ticket have not been found. The 1881 census gives his occupation as Master Mariner; 1891 a Mariner and in 1901 he is living with one of his daughters and family and his occupation is Fisherman. Samuel is given as a Coast Fisherman in 1911 and living with his daughter and family. Samuel died in the July quarter of 1927 in the Camelford registration district.

Samuel and Ann had 4 known children, the youngest of whom:

**Maud May Thomas** married **Julian Keat** in the April quarter of 1899. Maud and Julian had 6 children. On 19 July 1913 Maud and the 5 daughters left from Plymouth on the Ionic for Wellington, New Zealand, her husband and 8 year old son having left the previous year on 17 November 1912 from Plymouth on the Athenic for Wellington New Zealand. The family

settled there, married and died in New Zealand but Maud May and husband Julian did make a visit back to Europe in 1949 when they stayed with a Mrs Taylor at Tintagel. Son Julian fought as a Private in the NZOC in WW1

**Helena Grace** was born in 1875 and died in 1970 and she became an Assistant Teacher and was still working in 1939. She married and they had 1 daughter.

**Ann** born 1874 married a Charles Thomas and had 2 children.

**William**, their son born in 1866, married and had one known son **William Lane Thomas**. William Lane joined up in the Army Service Corps in WWI, his joining date of 1915 suggesting that he was not conscripted. He was an A/Sgt and on discharge on 15 March 1919 had some sort of a disability. William died in 1953.

2) **Mary Thomas**, the second of Charles' siblings, was born in 1844 in Port Isaac and in the July quarter of 1862 she married **William Mitchell** in the Bodmin registration district. Mary appears on the 1851 census with her parents and in 1861 she is living in Port Isaac with a widow and she is said to be a House Servant. The 1871 Mary is living next door to her parents and brother Charles and has her own son Charles whose age is given as 5. Mary is described as a Mariner's wife. By 1881 she has 3 children and her husband is shown as being at home, occupation a Mariner. On the 1891 census Mary is still living next door to her mother, **the Sub Postmistress** and Mary's niece **Elizabeth Grace Lobb**. Mary's son Arthur is given as an apprentice grocer and his younger brother William is a scholar.

Mary died on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1898 and was buried in St Endellion Churchyard, according to the UK Find a Grave.

**Mary & William Mitchell** had 3 children, the eldest of whom was Charles.

**Charles Mitchell** was born about 1866 and appears on the 1871 census with his mother Mary and living next door to his grandmother Grace, the Postmistress. 1881 census shows Charles as living still in Port Isaac with his parents and his occupation is Pupil Teacher. Charles must have moved to London and on 11 Sept 1886 he was married in Islington to **Adeline Louisa Turner**. By 1891 Charles and family had moved from Islington to Willesden and his occupation is given as 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Clerk, War Office, as it is on the 1901 census also. Charles had died by the time of the 1911 census as his wife is shown as a widow at that time. Charles and Adeline had 6 known children and there is an **interesting link to the Post Office by what would be Charles Thomas' great nephews and nieces**.

**Leonard Haswell Mitchell** was the oldest of Charles Mitchell and Adeline's children born 16 September 1887 in Islington. The 1911 census gives his occupation **as Assistant Clerk, Secretary's Office, GPO**. The British Postal Appointments Books, 1737 – 1969 gives Leonard's date appointed as July 1907. No information was found about his time during WW1 and he was found next on the 1939 census when his occupation was given as Executive Office, Civil Service. Leonard died on 23 November 1971 in Elstree, Hertfordshire. **Charles Carew Mitchell** was the second son, born 21 August 1889 in Islington and the De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour 1914-1919 gives his death as 7 June 1917 at Messines where he

was serving with the Royal Engineers. His Reg No. Is 236912. The London War Memorial gives Charles with the rank of Pioneer and in the Royal Engineers 47<sup>th</sup> Div Sig Co. The Battle of Messines took place between 7<sup>th</sup> and 14 June 1917 where the British Army tunnelled under the German 4<sup>th</sup> Army front lines and 19 mines of 1,000,000 lbs explosives were detonated at 3:10am. De Ruvigny's states that Charles was educated at Dame Alice Owens School in Potter's Bar, a school founded in 1613 and that he joined the Signal Service in 1911. On the 1911 census Charles' occupation is given as 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Clerk, Board of Education.

**William Ford Mitchell** is given on the 1911 census as Assistant Naval Storekeeper, Admiralty. William was born in Willesden in the October quarter of 1891.

**Adeline Mary Grace Mitchell** is shown on the **British Postal Service Appointments Books** as having been appointed in 1913 as a **Woman Clerk**, London MOD. Adeline was born on 27 December 1893 in Willesden and married Lt Dr William Edward Curtis on 18 June 1918 at St Paul, Haringey. On the 1939 census William is shown as Professor of Physics – he was also Head of the Department. William was a reader at Kings, London in 1922, elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1934 Head of Dept at Newcastle University and created CBE in 1967. Also shown on the 1939 census is their son Geoffrey Curtis, later Dr who was born in June 1919. His death on 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 1983 in the Warrington area was announced in The Times on 8<sup>th</sup> October.

**Oliver Worden Mitchell** was born on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1898 in Willesden and on the UK Royal Navy Registers of Seamen's Services it states that he was serving on President 11 on 20 September 1916 and his last service date is given as 26 January 1918. The University of London Student Records (War List) states that Oliver was an Aircraftsman RNAS. The 1939 census gives Oliver's occupation as School Master. He died in Aylesbury on 25 October 1963.

**George Mitchell** was born on 10 June 1900 in Willesden and in 1939 he was still living in that area where he was a Works Foreman, Electrical Engineer Dynamo & Motor Repair.

**3) Christiana Thomas** was the 3rd of Charles' siblings born in 1847 in Port Isaac. Christiana married Richard Lobb and they are known to have had 9 children, 7 of whom survived. It was Christiana who was the Informant at her brother Charles' death in 1901 and her address was given as Brook Cottage, Port Isaac. Her husband Richard was a Wall Mason, according to the census returns. Find a Grave Index gives Richard's date of death as 4<sup>th</sup> October 1909 and he is buried in the St Endellion Churchyard. Christiana died 17 years later, on 15 January 1926 and the MI shows Richard, Christiana and a son Alban who died in 1897 buried in the same grave.

Christiana's 7 living children were:

**Elizabeth Grace Lobb** was born on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1868 in Port Isaac. The 1891 shows Elizabeth with her grandmother Grace who is a Sub Postmistress and **Elizabeth is a Telegraphist**. The 1911 census shows Elizabeth to be living with her mother and 1 brother and her occupation is **Post Office Assistant (Telegraphist)**. In the City and County Directories in 1939 Elizabeth

is given as **Sub Postmistress stationer** and the 1939 census where Elizabeth is living with a brother and his wife at Brook Cottage, which was the address that Christiana gave on her brother's death certificate, her occupation is given as **Postmistress**. Elizabeth lived until 2 November 1950 and she was still at Brook Cottage when she died.

**Henry Lobb** was born on 15 February 1870 in Port Isaac. In 1911 Henry had been married for 8 years and had 2 sons. His occupation, like that of his father Richard was Wall Mason. In the 1939 census Henry is shown as living in Wadebridge with his wife Sarah. Henry's 2 sons were Alban and Hubert William Lobb.

**Alban Lobb** is shown on the 1939 census under the name of Albion and is living with his wife in Plymouth and his occupation is given as **Sorting Clerk GPO Plymouth GPO**. The British Postal Appointment Books gives his Date Appointed as 1924 Plymouth. Alban died in Plymouth in the July quarter of 1982. Alban had a younger brother Hubert, born 3 March 1909 and he was a Mason.

**Alban** born in 1879 was Christiana and Richard Lobb's 3<sup>rd</sup> child. He died on 22 June 1897 and is buried in St Endellion Churchyard.

**William Charles Lobb**, the 4<sup>th</sup> child, being born on 10 August 1881 and his occupation given in 1911 is that of General Mason. When William applied for a US passport in 1924 he stated that he had sailed from Liverpool about 1911 and wanted a passport to enable him to visit relatives in England. There are 2 William Charles Lobb with similar details but the information on the passport application, US WW1 Draft and WW11 draft papers and Federal Naturalization Records of 20 April 1917 when he left Canada for Buffalo, NY suggest that this is the correct person.

**Donald Pascoe Lobb** was their 5<sup>th</sup> child, born in September 1883 in Port Isaac. Donald sailed from Southampton on the Philadelphia on 28 April 1906 to New York arriving there on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1906. By the time of the 1911 census he had returned and was living at the property of his aunt by marriage and his Uncle Charles' widow, in Truro where she was running a Boarding House. This was 98 Kenwyn Street, Truro which was Charles' home and the place of his death. Also boarding in the house was **Bernard Harry Sanderson, a Telephone Inspector**. Donald departed from Avonmouth on the Royal Edward for Quebec and on 1 November 1913 he crossed into the US once more at the Niagara Falls. The 2 brothers are found to be residing in the same city and crossed the border with Canada on a number of occasions. It is not known when Donald finally returned to England but in the April quarter of 1930 he married Catherine Moyes in Truro. The 1939 census finds Donald and Catherine living in Brook Cottage, the family home, with Donald's sister Elizabeth Grace. Donald's occupation on all documents is given as carpenter and the US documents give eye and hair colour and also the fact that he was blind in his left eye. Donald died on 8 April 1952 and is buried in the St Endellion Churchyard with so many other members of his family.

**Hubert Lobb** is the next child, born on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1887. On the 1911 Census Hubert was boarding in Henley on Thames and his occupation is given as **Sorting Clerk and Telegraphist**. Hubert married Edith K Robertson 19 August 1913 in Reading. Henry joined the Royal Engineers in October 1915 and at that time was living in Truro. Hubert and Edith's first child

**Donald Richard Robinson Lobb** was born on 20 February 1916. On the 1939 Census Donald's occupation is given as **Skilled Workman Telephone and Telegraph Fitter Post Office Engineering**. Hubert, his father with whom he was living, is given as **Overseer Post Office** and his younger brother **Stanley Hubert**, born 2 October 1919 is also a **Skilled Workman Telephone and Telegraph Fitter Post Office Engineering**. Donald married Martha Harris in Truro in the July quarter of 1941. Donald died on 26 May 1983. **Stanley Hubert** can be found in the British Postal Service Appointment Books in 1945 as **SW11 Plymouth**. Stanley Hubert died in Truro on 1 December 2001.

**Richard Harold Lobb** was the youngest child of Richard Lobb and Christiana being born on 5 June 1890 in Port Isaac. British Postal Service Appointment Books show **Richard Harold's** Date Appointed as being 1920 when he is given as **Sorting Clerk & Telegraphist Bodmin**. The 1939 Census gives Richard Harold as **Overseer Post Office** and his address at that time is St Austell. Richard married in the July quarter of 1922 in the Bodmin registration district and the following year they had a daughter **Frances Marion Lobb** born on 27 September 1923. British Postal Service Appointment Books show that in 1943 **Frances was a Typist at St Austell**. Frances Marion died in the October quarter of 1997 in the Cambourne – Redruth registration district. Richard had a second daughter, born 14 July 1937 in St Austell, named Barbara.

## Part Two: Marriage and children

1: Did your pensioner marry? What was their spouse's name, and when and where did they marry them? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about their spouse (e.g. when/where they were born, their occupation)

**Charles Thomas married Ellen Courtis** on 10 June 1879 at St George's Church in Truro. Ellen was the daughter of Charles Courtis and Elizabeth Jenkin, born in the October quarter of 1840 in Truro and baptized on 30 May 1841 in Truro. Charles Courtis was born in Mullion, Cornwall about 1805 and he and Elizabeth Jenkins married on 2 February 1834 at St Clement, Cornwall. Charles' occupation on the 1871 census is given as Butcher and Elizabeth's as dressmaker when they were living on Kenwyn Street, Truro

Ellen had two sisters, Elizabeth Ann and Mary and they are shown with their parents and Ellen living on Kenwyn Street in the 1851;1861;1871 census returns. Both were described as dressmakers. On the 1881 Charles Courtis is said to be a widower with Charles Thomas, son in law, occupation being Telegraph Clerk and daughter Ellen with no occupation given. The 3 occupants are shown on the 1891 census still at the same address

On 9 April 1891 the Royal Cornwall Gazette announced the death of Charles Courtis on 5<sup>th</sup> April, aged 86.



By the time of the 1901 Charles and Ellen had moved to 98 Kenwyn Street. Charles was said to be a 'Retired Post Office Clerk'. Charles lived only a short time longer and his death certificate states that he died at 98 Kenwyn Street on 16 June 1901. The cause of death given is apoplexy chronic interstitial nephritis. Charles was 46 years of age. His sister Christiana Lobb registered the death on 17 June 1901

Ellen was still living in the house in 1911 and she was described as a Boarding House Keeper on the Census. On the 1911 census there was Catherine Moyes, a 31 year old married woman acting as an Assistant to Ellen, with her 6 year old son Charles. Boarding in the house were 42 year old Amelia Wills, a single woman who was a dressmaker, Donald Pascoe Lobb, Charles' relative and a carpenter and Bernard Harry Sanderson, a Telephone Inspector.

Ellen died in the April quarter of 1924 in the Bodmin registration district, aged 83.

2: Did your pensioner have any children? What were their names, and when they were born? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about them (e.g. occupation, where they lived later in life)

Charles and Ellen did not have any children.

### Part Three: Work

1: What occupation was your pensioner recorded as doing in census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

1861 – Scholar  
1871 – Telegraphist  
1881 – Telegraph Clerk  
1891 – Post Office Clerk  
1901 – Retired Post Office Clerk

2: What occupations were people living with your pensioner (e.g. spouse, children, boarders) doing in the census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

1861 Port Isaac Road, Port Isaac  
William Thomas – Fisherman  
Grace Thomas – Fisherman's Wife  
Samuel Thomas – Fisherman's Son  
Christiana Thomas – Fisherman's Daughter  
Charles Thomas – Fisherman's Son

1871 Post Office, Fore Street, Port Isaac  
William Thomas – Post Master  
Grace Thomas - Post Mistress  
Charles Thomas – Telegraphist

1881 27 Kenwyn Street, Truro  
Charles Courtis – Butcher (Retired)  
Charles Thomas – Telegraph Clerk  
Ellen Thomas – no occupation given

1891 27 Kenwyn Street, Truro  
Charles Thomas – Post Office Clerk  
Ellen Thomas – no occupation given

1901 98 Kenwyn Street, Truro  
Charles Thomas – Retired Post Office Clerk  
Ellen Thomas – no occupation given  
Catherine ? - dressmaker (visitor)  
Elizabeth Grace Lobb – Post Office Clerk (visitor)

#### Part Four: Anything Else

Please use this space to record anything else you have found out about your pensioner

Port Isaac, where Charles Thomas was born, is better known to many as Port Wenn, the setting for the television series 'Doc Martin' and the 'Fisherman's Friends' which is a cappella group keeping alive the old sea shanties.

Charles father William is from the hamlet of Port Quin which is 2 miles from Port Isaac but went into decline in the 1840s. This area on the Atlantic Coast of North Cornwall is now owned by the National Trust and has been designated an 'Area of Natural Beauty'. Both places were based on the very lucrative pilchard trade, tin mining and farming. The pilchard industry, where the fish were salted and pressed and packed in wooden boxes and casks, was such that the pilchards were sent all over Europe and particularly during Lent to Roman Catholic countries.

In 1850 there were 49 registered fishing boats in Port Isaac, which illustrates the importance of the fishing trade.

It is thought that there was a Celtic community at Port Isaac and there was certainly a community since medieval times. The name 'Porth Izzik' is Cornish and means 'corn port' and corn was exported from St Isaac. There was also trade with South Wales from where coal was brought.

St Endellion Church, named after St Endelienta, was built with granite which was brought from the Isle of Lundy in the Bristol Channel. Dr Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, was at one time a Prebendary here. St Endellion is just outside Port Isaac and in 1882 a Chapel of Ease, St Peter's was built in the village. In 1806 The Quakers had a Meeting House in Port Isaac but in 1832 this became a Baptist Church. It was a strongly Methodist community with both United Methodist and Wesleyan Chapels from 1846. John Wesley had described it as 'the liveliest place in the (Methodist) Circuit'.

In 1861 William is said to be a Fisherman and was living on Port Isaac Road but by the time of the 1871 census William Thomas and family were living in the Post Office on Fore Street, in the centre of the community and the population at that time was 750. A school had opened in Port Isaac in 1804 and this is possibly where Charles attended.

30 miles from Port Isaac is Truro and it was there in 1879 that Charles married Ellen and he lived there for the next 22 years, until his death. Truro gained city status in 1877 and in 1880 the building of the Cathedral started. The earliest archaeological finds of a permanent settlement suggest that the Truro area dates from the Norman times. It became a stannary town for assaying and stamping tin and copper from the surrounding mines. Truro is the county town of Cornwall and was prosperous during the 19th Century and particularly after the link to London Paddington via the GWR railway in the 1860s.

Sir Humphry Davy, the chemist and inventor, including the invention of the miner's safety lamp known as a Davy lamp, attended Truro Grammar School and Richard Lander, the explorer who with his brother were the first Europeans to follow the course of the River Niger.

Truro would have been a very different place from Port Isaac for Charles. It is not known for how long Charles was sick but he had no time to enjoy a retirement and died aged 46 just after his retirement on the grounds of ill health.

Charles and Ellen had no children but the family links to the Postal Service continued and the following members of his extended family were employed by the Post Office:

- William Thomas, his father and Grace his mother
- Mary Bate
- Alban (Albion) Lobb
- Donald Richard Robinson Lobb

- Elizabeth Grace Lobb
- Frances M Lobb
- Hubert Lobb
- Richard Harold Lobb
- Stanley Hubert Lobb
- Arthur Thomas Mitchell
- Leonard H Mitchell
- William Samuel Mitchell

Bernard Harry Sanderson, Telephone Inspector, boarding with Charles' widow at 98 Kenwyn Street, Truro in 1911

### Part Five: Your Sources

Please use this space to record the sources you have used

#### Charles Thomas

Class: RG 9; Piece: 1538; Folio: 41; Page: 6; GSU roll: 542828.

The National Archives; Kew, London, England; 1871 England Census; Class: RG10; Piece: 2251; Folio: 51; Page: 25; GSU roll: 834878

Class: RG11; Piece: 2312; Folio: 106; Page: 7; GSU roll: 1341555

The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891; Class: RG12; Piece: 1830; Folio: 88; Page: 4; GSU roll: 6096940

Class: RG13; Piece: 2222; Folio: 95; Page: 32

Cornwall, England, Parish Registers, 1538-2010

England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915

England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837-1915

England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915

England, Select Marriages, 1538–1973

**Ellen Courtis**

Class: HO107; Piece: 147; Book: 15; Civil Parish: Kenwyn; County: Cornwall; Enumeration District: 5; Folio: 16; Page: 24; Line: 19; GSU roll: 241269

Class: HO107; Piece: 1910; Folio: 382; Page: 5; GSU roll: 221063-221064

Class: RG 9; Piece: 1559; Folio: 65; Page: 8; GSU roll: 542831

The National Archives; Kew, London, England; 1871 England Census; Class: RG10; Piece: 2284; Folio: 30; Page: 6; GSU roll: 834888

Class: RG14; Piece: 13855; Schedule Number: 38

England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915

England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975

General Register Office; United Kingdom; Volume: 5c; Page: 90

**Samuel Worden Thomas**

England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915

The National Archives; Kew, London, England; 1871 England Census; Class: RG10; Piece: 2590; Folio: 85; GSU roll: 835275

Class: RG11; Piece: 2293; Folio: 49; Page: 24; GSU roll: 1341550

The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891; Class: RG12; Piece: 1817; Folio: 44; Page: 21; GSU roll: 6096927

Class: RG13; Piece: 2202; Folio: 35; Page: 8

Class: RG14; Piece: 13700; Schedule Number: 2

Cornwall, England, Parish Registers, 1538-2010

England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915

General Register Office; United Kingdom; Volume: 5c; Page: 9

**Mary Thomas**

England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915

The National Archives; Kew, London, England; 1871 England Census; Class: RG10; Piece: 2251; Folio: 51; Page: 25; GSU roll: 834878

Class: RG11; Piece: 2293; Folio: 41; Page: 7; GSU roll: 1341550

The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891; Class: RG12; Piece: 1817; Folio: 45; Page: 23; GSU roll: 6096927

England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837-1915

UK and Ireland, Find A Grave Index, 1300s-Current

### **William Thomas**

Class: HO107; Piece: 1904; Folio: 625; Page: 30; GSU roll: 221055-221056

England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915

England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975

England, Select Marriages, 1538-1973

UK and Ireland, Find A Grave Index, 1300s-Current

### **Christiana Thomas**

The National Archives; Kew, London, England; 1871 England Census; Class: RG10; Piece: 2251; Folio: 44; Page: 10; GSU roll: 834878

Class: RG11; Piece: 2293; Folio: 47; Page: 20; GSU roll: 1341550

The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891; Class: RG12; Piece: 1817; Folio: 46; Page: 25; GSU roll: 6096927

Class: RG13; Piece: 2202; Folio: 34; Page: 6

Class: RG14; Piece: 13700; Schedule Number: 21

Cornwall, England, Parish Registers, 1538-2010

General Register Office; United Kingdom; Volume: 5a; Page: 98

UK and Ireland, Find A Grave Index, 1300s-Current